

Letter to the Editor

The need to redefine psychosocial risks at work

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To the Editor,

In 1984, the joint committee composed of the International Labor Organization (ILO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) defined psychosocial factors at work as “interactions between and among work environment, job content, organizational conditions and workers’ capacities, needs, culture, personal extra-job considerations that may, through perceptions and experience, influence health, work performance and job satisfaction” [1].

Over time, as a result of scientific development in the area, concepts such as ‘psychosocial risk factors’ or ‘psychosocial risks’ have emerged, which are used interchangeably by the scientific community [2], as well as the following concepts: ‘risk factors’, ‘risks’, ‘psychosocial working conditions’ and ‘stress factors’ [3], which is why there are researchers that claim that psychosocial risks at work are complex and that there is still no accepted definition [4].

In the light of the above, researchers such as Delgadillo [5] have strongly criticized the definition of the ILO/WHO joint committee, describing it as insolvent, ambiguous, with false breadth and omissions; the above is particularly important when measuring these risks. How can we measure something that has

no clear definition? Why continue using a definition that has been associated with other concepts?

The present authors invite the scientific community to propose a new definition of psychosocial risks at work, which responds to the new needs of workers and with well-defined attributes.

Conflict of interest

The authors have no conflict of interest to report.

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